

### **A Commitment to Transparency and Responsibility**

As a new member of the Appropriations Committee in 2008, I committed to reform the earmark process – a process which, in my view, was broken. I immediately took steps to ensure my earmark request process set a standard of responsibility. Though all of the policies I adopted for continued openness and transparency have not been adopted in a bipartisan way, I will persist in pushing for reform to the earmark process in the committee

It is Congress's constitutional responsibility to direct federal spending. I continue to believe a Member of Congress who is familiar with the needs and capabilities of his or her district is better equipped to determine the worthiness of federal projects in the region than an unelected Washington bureaucrat – provided those projects are awarded through an open and transparent process with specific and publicly defined standards.

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### **Notice of Earmark Process for Fiscal Year 2011**

***Our Deadline for FY2011 Earmark Requests is***

***Monday, March 1, 2010 by 4:00pm CST***

***Please follow this link to our form:***

**[Appropriations Request Form](#)**

**Any earmark request submitted to my office for consideration must comply with the following standards:**

- Requestor must not seek funding on behalf of “fronts” or “pass-through” entities that mask the true recipient of the funding. Funding may not be passed through to another entity for activities other than support or procurement. The primary purpose of any request may NOT be to secure funds for other entities.
- If Requestor is NOT a unit of federal, state or local government, the Requestor must agree that the entity itself will spend at least 50% of the requested funds.
- If the receiving entity is NOT a unit of federal, state or local government, OR where the entity receiving the funding will NOT be providing a good or service (including research) for use by a unit of federal, state or local government, the Requestor must agree to provide matching funds of 5% or more above the statutory requirement.
- Requestor must show proof of a commitment of state and/or local matching funds, where applicable.
- Requestor must put forth a detailed finance plan showing exactly how the money requested will be spent, through completion of the project.
  - o The plan must include: (1) anticipated sources of the funding for the duration of the project; (2) the percent and source of required matching funds; (3) the percent of funds for the project requested that will come from non-governmental sources, if any; (4) the percent of funds for the requested project that will be disbursed to other private or public entities, if any; and (5) justification for use of federal taxpayer dollars.

- Requestor must agree to public disclosure of any earmark request, earmark application and/or any information provided in support of a request.
- Requestor must address whether a project serves a federal interest and/or has a federal nexus.
- Requestor must not seek funds to be used for a building, program or project named for a sitting Member of Congress. Exceptions for previously named buildings, programs or projects must be fully justified.

Any request submitted to my office that does not adequately comply with these standards WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING.

Requestors should know that I reserve the right to not make any earmark requests of the Appropriations Committee for Fiscal Year 2011. I also retain the right to withdraw any request from the committee's consideration at any time and for any reason.

**Additionally, I personally commit to the following:**

- I will post a list of all projects requested of the committee by me, as well as a list of all final projects funded at my request. I will not request a project on behalf of a requestor that does not agree to this disclosure as I believe the earmark process should be transparent.
- I will continue to support recent steps made toward openness and transparency of the earmark process as well as propose and advocate new standards and guidelines for additional accountability and evaluation.
- I will not attempt to circumvent transparency by "airdropping" an earmark into a bill in conference which was not vetted on the House floor as I believe the process by which Congress spends the American people's money should be transparent.
- I will request of the committee that any earmark secured by me be included in the text of the relevant bill.
- If funding is secured in a bill for one of my requests, it is my intent to place a plan into the *Congressional Record* detailing how the funds will be spent and justifying the use of taxpayer funds in advance of floor votes so that other Members will have the opportunity to evaluate my funded projects before voting.

- I will require outside earmark recipients to put up matching funds of 5% or more above the statutory requirement

(except if the receiving entity is a unit of federal, state or local government, or if the entity receiving the funding will be providing a good or service (including research) for use by a unit of federal, state or local government) to improve accountability and to ensure that American taxpayers do not bear all the risk for such expenditures.

- I will not use taxpayer money to fund a building, program or project named after myself or any other sitting Member of Congress. Any exception for a previously named building, program or project would be fully justified.

- I will hold present and future Administrations accountable for the way in which taxpayer-funded earmarks are used. The executive branch asks for earmarks, too, and has done so under Democratic and Republican administrations alike.

Any application submitted for a project that does not comply with these standards will not be considered for submission by my office to the Appropriations Committee. Upon receipt of a timely application, the request will be evaluated for compliance with these standards and for merit. Points of merit that will be considered by my office include:

- National Defense
- Homeland Security
- Public Safety
- Critical Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Health and Welfare
- Education and Research

I will continue to set an example of accountability and transparency, as well as to self-impose a series of additional requirements, as detailed above, that I believe will set a higher standard for a more responsible process. I am committed to being a vigilant guardian of the taxpayers' money, helping to expose and eliminate wasteful or questionable spending, and I welcome my colleagues on both sides of the aisle – Republican and Democrat alike – to embrace the standards I have committed to above.

Sincerely,

*To Bonner*

U.S. House of Representatives  
Request: Congressman Bonner's fiscal year 2010 funded appropriations requests, please [click](#)